1: Linton E-5 (1926-27) 1933 FY8 Tanala FY8

On the western side of the divide the forest is lower and more open, resembling moderately heavy second growth timber in the eastern United States. In the bottoms grow clumps of tall raffia palms. Forest and open grass lands meet in an irregular line. This line is the real western boundary of the Tanala country. A few of their villages are in the open, but hardly one is out of sight of the forest.

On the eastern side of the divide there is daily rain at all seasons. On the west there is a seasonal change, comparable to that in the plateau, the rainiest months being December to February. Because of the altitude the climate is temperate throughout most of the Tanala country. During the winter season it becomes unpleasantly cold, with frost in the low places and heavy morning fogs that chill one to the bone. Even in summer it is rarely uncomfortably hot.

Throughout the whole of the Tanala country there is a multitude of streams and rivers. These are mostly swift, with many falls and rapids so that canoe travel is unprofitable. There are a few small lakes. In the bottoms of some valleys one encounters rather extensive swamps, which become impassable during the rainy season.

From the point of view of natural resources, the region is not especially tempting. Wild food is scarce and hard to get and agriculture involves heavy labor in cutting and burning the forest. Grazing is rather poor and cattle do not thrive in such a wet climate. In opposition to this, the forest affords an abundance of good timber, far beyond the local needs, raffia, rubber and other products, and there are considerable deposits of iron ore. The latter are neither rich enough nor extensive enough to be of much value for export purposes. There are also deposits of other valuable minerals, crystal and gold, but these meant nothing to the first settlers. Although there are traces of ancient gold working in many parts of the Tanala territory, the natives do not seem to have mined the gold themselves.

Perhaps the greatest gift which the region offers to settlers is a relative immunity from attack. The terrain makes large-scale invasion almost impossible. Moreover, the country was fairly healthy prior to the opening up of regular communication with the coast. People driven from the plateau could settle in the higher forest without fear of the deadly coast fevers.

V. ECONOMIC LIFE

SOURCES OF FOOD

AGRICULTURE

The foundation of Tanala economic life is agriculture and the natives cannot conceive of existence without it. During the seasons of planting and harvest all other activities are suspended. Tanala who have entered the employ of Europeans will always specify that they must receive leave at these times to return to their villages to attend to their rice, and will do so even when it entails a considerable financial loss. Every able-bodied member of the tribe takes part in the work and even kings do not consider it beneath their dignity to work on their own plantations. 241 [643]

The account of Ikongo agriculture given by Sadaro Antoine is of such interest that it seems best to quote it in full. He says: "Our crops are rice, maize, manioc, beans, bananas, *voemba* and *kalamaka* [two varieties of ground nut] and many sorts of greens, *anamamy*, *mangevotra*, *anatsonga*, etc.

"The growing of rice is our principal culture and it is the foundation of our food. Our ancestors knew only six varieties: *vary lava*, *vary botrika*, *velonizy*, *vary mandinika*, *bemalady* and *malady*. Rice is cultivated twice a year, the first crop being called *vary aloha* and the second *vary afara*. The Ikongo have three sorts of land: 1. *Tavy* [newly cleared forest]. 2. *Haoka* [swampy land]. 3. *Hosy* [terraced and irrigated land]. The *vary aloha* is sown in the *haoka* or *hosy* in the month *Maka* [July] and harvested in the month *Asaramantsy* [November]. The *vary afara* is sown in the *tavy* in *Asaramantsy* [November] and harvested in *Valasira* [April]. 243 [311] [221]

"This is how the *tavy* is made: The weather is fine, the sun bright. It commences to be hot. The *ombiaty* and *famitra* are in flower, seeds sprout, and the shoots of the *amonta*, *volomboro* and *voamboa* begin to open. The birds *fitatram*, *railonga* and *olily* sing from the trees. These are the signs foretelling the *Sakave* [time for cutting the *tavy*]. The men leave the village and go to some mountain or hollow covered with thick forest. They halt at the edge of the forest and divide the land to make the *tavy*. Each one sets up a mark on his part, the *tampon tany*. Satisfied with the division they return to the village loaded with faggots. The next morning all go to work. Everything, trees, bushes and vines, is cut down. After two or three days of individual work the men begin to help each other (in cutting down

1: Linton E-5 (1926-27) 1933 FY8 Tanala FY8

give each other sympathy in their affliction. If one was castrated alone, he would die of grief. The Betsileo have a similar belief, but I could not learn whether it was universal among the Tanala. 825

Most of the Tanala territory is poorly suited to cattle culture because of the heavy forest and constant rain. It is only along the western margin of their lands, where they border on the plateau, that one finds real grazing country. The Tanala herds are usually small and, although cattle have great social significance, they contribute little to the physical well-being of the people. They are only killed in connection with ceremonies, and the average Tanala does not taste beef once a month. Indeed, cattle killings are so rare that to dream of cutting or eating beef is a bad omen, presaging a funeral in the family. Hides are so little used that, until European traders provided a market for them, it was customary to cut up the animals without flaying them and cook meat and skin together. 233 311 [262] [787] [439]

The Menabe consider milk a luxury, and it is almost impossible to purchase it in their territory. It is a by-product, taken only when the cow seems to have more than enough to feed her calf. Milking, like everything else connected with cattle, is done exclusively by men. The explanation given for this is that it is a dangerous occupation. Actually, it is a laborious process, requiring three persons. One man holds the calf where the cow can see and lick it, another milks, usually squatting on the right side, and a third holds the cow's tail over her back and gently rubs her vagina with his fingers. The milk is boiled at once, while still warm. It is considered disgusting to drink it fresh. After boiling, it is either drunk or cooked with rice. 234 462 [252]

The Ikongo make more use of milk and are somewhat more expert at milking, although they use the same method. They rarely boil their milk. A little is drunk fresh, but most of it is deliberately soured. A little sour milk is always left in the milking gourd so that the new milk turns almost at once. The curds are eaten with a spoon and the whey drunk. None of the Tanala know how to make butter or cheese. 234 252 [264]

Apparently cow's milk was rarely if ever used to supplement or replace mother's milk in feeding nursing infants. The idea has recently been borrowed from Europeans, but it is still considered rather unnatural and is used only as a last resort. 853 177

The wheel and plow were unknown in Madagascar prior to European contact. The Tanala never use their cattle for draught or transport and this holds for the rest of the island, with one or two exceptions. The Imerina and Betsileo now use ox carts and 177 492